TRAINING GIRLS TO BECOME LABOR LEADERS

Chicago Has School for Industrial Leadership to Fit Working Girls to Battle for Themselves—Taught to Meet Police Interference.

IT IS in harmony with the spirit of the times that an organization of women should have founded America's first School for Industrial Leadership—for women. Heretofore when an industry has become organized strongly enough to form a union the head has almost always been a man, unless a strike has happened to throw into prominence a woman leader. But that there are many women in the ranks who have within themselves potential leadership is strongly believed by Mrs. Raymond Robins, president of the National Women's Trade Union League, under the auspices of which the School for Industrial Leadership was founded.

Mrs. Robins knows well whereof she speaks. She herself is a social economist and a member of the Commission on Industrial Education of the American Federation of Labor, a member of the Executive Committee of the Illinois section of the American Association for Labor Legislation and of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. She is the sister of Miss Mary E. Dreier, until recently president of the New York Women's Trade Union League, and sister-in-law of Mrs. H. Edward Dreier, chairman of the Brooklyn Woman Suffrage party, not to mention the fact that she is the wife of Raymond Robins, known nation-wide as a social service expert and an advocate of organized labor and land value taxation.

Mrs. Robins unfolded to members of the Inter-City Conference of Social Workers last week the working out of the school and its probable influence as a factor in the growth of the labor movement.

Freedom Comes from Within.

Mrs. Robins thinks that real freedom and dignity can come to the working woman only when she becomes bold enough to stand for herself and her comrades.

To illustrate her point, Mrs. Robins says:

"I have only to look at the change that has taken place in the girls with whom I started when the National League was organized ten years ago, in 1903, to know that the few, given a chance, can, in turn, liberate the many. Those girls, young, timid, backward then, are now big, self-contained, fine women. And there cannot be self-government in any industry until all the women workers overcome their timidity and become willing to accept the responsibility of decisions on their own behalf."

There are plenty of women of the so-called "educated classes" who have been fighting for the working woman, but it is intended that this school shall enable her to do the work for herself and so give her initiative and confidence.

Organization, Then Self-Government.

The first purpose of the National Women's Trade Union League is to organize women into trade unions. It does not believe that there can be any measure of self-government until there is organization. It also does not think that there can be organization until there is education.

Because of this latter belief, the seventy-five women, representing twenty-three trades, who were present at the fourth biennial convention of the National Women's Trade Union League, held in St. Louis in June of last year, voted to start a school for training in industrial leadership. At that time there was no money in the treasury with which to equip a permanent school, and the only thing to do therefore seemed to be to start a temporary school at the national headquarters in Chicago.

Isolated Girls Feel Urge.

Mrs. Robins sent out a preparatory statement to organizations all over the country. In answer she got one hundred replies, not from girls who were already more or less leaders, but from little factory girls in Alabama and shop girls in Texas.

In each case, however, in which a girl is sent to the Chicago school the national organization would rather have her responsible to some city Trade Union League or to some allied local group, such as a local union or a local federation of labor, who will help to share the expense of her training and to whom she will return at the end of it, and under whose supervision she may work in any trade that may need her at the moment.

Three Girls First Pupils.

Therefore, only three girls became enrolled at the school last year—Louise Mittelstadt, a member of the Tinfoilers' Union of Kansas City, sent by the Industrial Council of Kansas City; Myrtle Whitehead, a member of the Cork, Crown and Seal Operators' Union of Baltimore, sent by the Trade Union League of Baltimore, and Fanny Cohen of the Kimono and Wrapper Union of New York, sent through the co-operation of friends.

The Industrial Council of Kansas City, which is that city's federation of Labor, is an organization of men. The reason that they took so great an interest in a girl operator is because of the fact that, in their opinion, she is the one working woman in Kansas City capable of organizing trades. They therefore gave her a leave of absence of four months, with full salary of $15 a week. As a good percentage of the amount given by the Industrial Council to Miss Mittelstadt had to go to the maintenance of her family, the national organization supplemented the amount left by a scholarship in order that she might have $12 a week to live on while in Chicago.

Miss Whitehead and Miss Cohen were also given scholarships.

Although the league had hoped that each girl would be able to stay for a year, in all three cases the length of time the girls could afford to remain has been four months.

The only standard by which students at the school are chosen is that of general efficiency. The rest—a knowledge of the general truths underlying labor—the school tries to give to them. It does not wish their training to be so localized or so restricted as to limit them to one locality or to one trade. Although they are to be responsible to some city organization their work will take them to all parts of the United States and into all classes of labor.

Courses Offered.

For that reason the course offered consists of academic and field work—the academic work, including both day and night courses, being given at Northwestern and Chicago universities, and the field work under the auspices of the national office.

The first class—given because most of the girls for whom the school is meant have been forced to go into industry when very young—is for the correct speaking and, with more emphasis, the correct writing of English. There are also day classes in political economy and industrial history. And, at the request of the girls themselves, they are taught bookkeeping.

There are three night classes, attended also by twenty-six members of the Chicago Trade Union League. The first, on "Public Speaking," is given by Professor Nelson of the University of Chicago. The other two are a course by William H. Holly, attorney for the league, on "Judicial Decisions Affecting Labor," and another course of lectures on "The Machinery of Boards of Arbitration and Trade Boards and Their Value."

The girls also studied the ten volumes of "Documentary History of Industrial Society in America," by Professor John R. Commons, of the University of Wisconsin.

How to Fight Police.

To complement the work at the universities field work was given in the conducting of a street meeting, the distributing of dodgers, the writing of dodgers, the best way of meeting police interference—should there be any—the best way of avoiding it by complying with different city ordinances relating to free speech, how to preside at meetings, how to secure legislation, how to meet the employer and how, if possible, to convert him.

Mrs. Robins impersonated the employer so the girls might have some one on whom to try out their arguments. She said she grew tired of always having to expound the same old arguments and once asked an employer if he couldn't give her a new one or two.

Joy Makes Efficiency.

The question of organization was also taken up. Some one has to be trained to organize young girls. Of the three girls in attendance at the school last winter Mrs. Robins thinks that Miss Whitehead, who is seventeen now and who has worked in a factory for nine years, is perhaps the best fitted, through her sheer joy in life, to organize young girls. Miss Mittelstadt would be the best organizer of older women, looking forward to the future, as she does, with all the intellectual force of her Russian Jewish race. And Miss Cohen would be the best all-round public speaker.

"Industrial education must come before conditions in the underpaid industries in which women work can be anything but bad," said Mrs. Robins.

"This fact was realized in Great Britain when it passed a law making it possible for a community to have a tutor if there are thirty people in that locality who want to learn. That is what we want also to do in America.

"The part of the work in which the most people seem to be interested is industrial history. A course in the history of the trade unions ought to be given—like the courses in England—to people who cannot come to the school.

Mind Hunger of Students.

"It is hard to realize the hunger of the mind of these girls, the vast amount of idealism, too, there is among them. They fairly long for knowledge. I lent Miss Whitehead a book of poetry one night and it was as if she had heard music for the first time. She told me that all night long the rhythm of the lines had been going through her mind.

"That is the pity of not being able to educate every one of the hundred girls who wrote in about the school. They are eager now. But enthusiasm passes, and once gone by we will have to wait for another generation.

"Of course it may be possible to send for twenty-five of the girls. We hope to do so. The work of the universities was so splendid last year that we have asked for an extension and have it, and now if we can possibly get together the money we are going to send for every girl who wants to come to the school.

"The dreadful thing about modern life is that the question of earning their living should be of so paramount an importance to most girls that they have no time or strength to devote to constructive work, unless, of course, they may be educated so that they will be of enough value to a city organization to prevent their having to go back to work in the ranks, just for the necessities of life.

"But given the chance, there is no denying what they can do. Take, for instance, Agnes Nestor, appointed by President Wilson to a place on the Industrial Education Commission, and by trade a glove worker. She is one of hundreds who might be great if only taken out of the ranks. The purpose of the School for Industrial Education is, if possible, to free them all."

Mrs. Raymond Robins

Mrs. Havelock Ellis Maintains the Vote, Economic Independence and Socialism Are Only Middle Notes in Woman's Final Mastery of Life.

TO be told, in this day, that the freedom of women lies within themselves may be devastating to existing ideas of what constitutes personal liberty but it throws a light on the real psychology of women. The vote is waived aside very lightly by the woman who is the wife of so far-thinking a man as Dr. Havelock Ellis, as a mere step forward, not as the sum of woman's attainment.

Mrs. Havelock Ellis, playwright, novelist, lecturer, philosopher, has come from her flat in the southwest of London to try to tell American women what really lies at the bottom of their unrest. She should be able to diagnose them, for she is well equipped for the part she plays.

Married for twenty-three years to Dr. Ellis, working side by side with, but independent of, him, living in the calm of a Cornish farm and the seclusion of a Brixton flat, thinking, wondering, investigating, feeling, vital with the magnetism of sincerity, this little gray-haired woman feels that out of her fifty-three years of accumulated wisdom she has perhaps something of value to tell the younger generation of women.

How restless they are she did not know when, four weeks ago, she came to America to lecture on "Havelock Ellis, A Criticism by His Wife," "Olive Schreiner and the Woman Movement," "The Militant Movement: Its Cause and Cure," "The Maternal in Government," "Happiness as an Art," "James Hinton," and "Edward Carpenter."

Woman's Discontent Far-Reaching.

Not until she had spoken at the packed Little Theatre in Chicago, she says, did she realize that discontent in America is a far more reaching thing than just not being allowed to vote.

But what all her years of life have taught her, Mrs. Ellis says, are these fundamentals:

"Women can never in any true sense be independent until as grown daughters they no longer lean upon their fathers for support or until as wives they are financially independent of their husbands."

Mrs. Ellis has always been financially independent of Dr. Ellis. She has also always been individually independent of him. Of course, she will tell you that if Dr. Ellis had been any man but the broadest of thinkers, she couldn't possibly have married him. For Mrs. Ellis believes with profound conviction that for any person to think that any other person belongs to him is fatal.

"No one ever belongs to anyone else. That is the first rule. The woman belongs to herself completely; the man, to himself completely. A person is only of value by being individual and idealistic.

Where Lies Mastery of Life.

"Mastery of life, like mastery of music, lies in practising the middle notes so that in the end we may reach the high one. Socialism, the vote, the economic independence of women, are the middle notes. The high note is beyond. We shall reach it some day. In the meantime, just as the slaves had to be emancipated before they could begin to develop themselves, so women have to be freed before they can find themselves.

"The vote, the real socialism—which demands of the man at the top that he help the man at the bottom—the economic independence of women are all bridges that must be passed before women will be emancipated. These things, however, are not the end. They are the means to the end, the middle notes. Only when they have been passed—and the quicker, of course, the better—will women have begun to be independent.

Real Independence Is Within.

"Their real independence lies within themselves, in their ability to rid themselves of all the petty selfishnesses and cruelties of life. They can be made to do it. That is, many can.

"It is because of these that I am coming back to America next fall. The others, who do not understand, to them it will be but poison that they pass on as poison to other people, but to the women who want to see what life is really worth I think I at last have found something to say."

Mrs. Ellis sails for England on the Minnesota on June 27. When she returns to America in October she will lecture before the League for Political Education in New York and will then go on to Chicago, where arrangements have been made for the production of three of her plays "The Pixie," "The Mothers" and possibly "The Subjection of Kazdia," at the Little Theatre there. Then, too, she promises to come armed with her "New Commandments" for women, which she believes will help American women to solve the problem of their lives as individuals.

ARE WOMEN PEOPLE?

By ALICE DUER MILLER

IT DEPENDS ON WHO DID IT.

We are placed in an awkward position by a news item we have just received from M. G.

A certain state, it appears, has wasted $180,000 on voting machines which public sentiment won't allow to be used.

If the state in question is a woman suffrage state, this proves that women are unfit for the vote.

If, however, it is a manhood suffrage state, this shows only that the best and wisest of us make mistakes at times.

EXCUSE IT, PLEASE, MR. BLAKE.

(No, I am unable to grasp the logic of anti-suffragism.—John Galsworthy.)

Anti, Anti, burning bright
In our intellectual night,
What ingenious-minded guy
Could frame thy dreadful sophistry?

WHY WE OPPOSE WOMEN TRAVELLING IN RAILWAY TRAINS

1. Because travelling in trains is not a natural right.
2. Because our great-grandmothers never asked to travel in trains.
3. Because woman's place is in the home, not in the train.
4. Because it is unnecessary; there is no point reached by a train that cannot be reached on foot.
5. Because it will double the work of conductors, engineers and brakemen, who are already overburdened.
6. Because men smoke and play cards in trains. Is there any reason to believe women will behave better?

THE GREAT ILLUSION.

During the recent suffrage debate in the House of Lords, Lord Ampthill said: "All authority depends ultimately on force, and men alone are in a position to use force."

About the same time 1,500 policemen, with 1,000 more in reserve, were engaged in opposing the march of 200 women.

AND THEN THERE'S THIS.

"The less the noble lords talk of the evils of militancy the better . . . in view of the fact that Lords Selborne and Curzon, to say nothing of Lord Milner, are all members of that treasonable and seditious conspiracy known as the 'British Covenant' in support of armed revolution in Ulster."—Daily Herald (England.)

DO YOU KNOW?

That a woman has been elected president of a national bank in Illinois?

That a woman has been county judge in Colorado since 1911?

That a woman is one of the best revolver shots on the Chicago police force?

That two-thirds of the taxes in Delaware County, Pa., are paid by women?

That the increase in organized labor in New York State during the last year has been 20 per cent. in men's organizations and 111 per cent. among women?

INFORMATION WANTED.

A Westchester judge is reported to have decided that it is reprehensible for a mother to teach her child to pray that its father be made better.

Three possibilities remain: to pray that its father be made worse, to pray that he be preserved exactly as he is, or to omit his name from all supplications.

Will the judge please indicate which of these courses a conscientious wife and mother should pursue.

INCREASE OF CRIMINALITY AMONG WOMEN.

Last Sunday a woman spent eight hours in jail because her four-year-old daughter walked on the grass in a public park.

Both criminals, you observe, belong to the sex that is demanding the vote!

The fact that Vice-President Marshall has said: "My wife is against suffrage, and that settles me," has naturally inspired a good deal of poetry.

Feargus O'Brien writes:

My wife dislikes the income tax,
And so I cannot pay it;
She says that golf all interest lacks,
So now I never play it;
She is opposed to tolls repeal
(Though why, I cannot say),
But woman's duty is to feel,
And man's is to obey.

And Peter Parkins says:

I'm in a hard position for a perfect gentleman,
I want to please the ladies, but I don't see how I can,
My present wife's a suffragist, and counts on my support,
But my mother is an anti of a rather biting sort;
One grandmother is on the fence, the other much opposed,
And my sister lived in Oregon, and thinks the question's closed;
Each one is counting on my vote to represent her view.
Now what should you think proper for a gentleman to do?

Hovels Become Homes

TO make five people live where fifty-six lived before seems the reverse of a problem, yet it is a problem in city planning, says Miss Abastenia Eberle, the sculptor, and she also solved it. Few specialists on city housing have accomplished what Miss Eberle has done as a by-product, as it were, of her own profession.

It was no easy matter to take two old back tenements, swarming with lodgers of every description, with the rudest type of plumbing and sanitary conveniences, and for a moderate sum turn them into model apartments—apartments of such abundant charm and convenience that they were at once filled with clever people, who declare that they never want to live elsewhere.

Perhaps Miss Eberle's attention was first brought to the neglected tenement by her desire to enter more closely into the life of the people from whom she draws her models. It would not be strange if the artist whose "Windy Doorstep" and "Ragpicker" struck so clear a note of social sympathy should wish to live nearer to the folk whose histories she portrays.

Tenements Become "Dwellings."

Besides, she needed a studio close to her home, so she decided she would see what could be made of the two dingy houses at No. 206½ West 13th st. The "½" signifies that only the entrance is on the street. Three steps down through a basement alleyway and back under the 13th st. houses brings the visitor directly into a large, open court, fifty feet long and twenty-five feet wide. Here are the two tenements which Miss Eberle has converted, literally, according to to the building code, into dwellings.

Coming through the narrow, tunnel-like entrance into the big, open court, the first impression is of the gay scarlet geraniums all about and a general air of space and seclusion. It is easy to see why the writer folk have seized the place and made it their home. Martha Bensley Bruere, expert writer on household efficiency, and her husband, Robert Bruere, the socialist author, have the apartment under Miss Eberle, while Christina Merriman, of "The Survey," and Anne Moore, of the Woman's Trade Union League, live in the other house.

That makes five occupants of the buildings which three years ago were actually housing over fifty men, women and children. They would never know the place now. Partitions have been cut out, air and sunlight let in and everywhere cleanliness and space, until even a blind person would know the difference. How? Why, the smell of the tenement has gone. If you do away with the overcrowding, and dark rooms and dirt you will do away with the smells that go always with such things, says Miss Eberle.

House Disinfected and Scraped.

The first thing, of course, was to clean the Augean stables, a task begun by burning 100 pounds of sulphur in the two houses. Then every inch of wall space was scraped and sprayed with disinfectant. Next, the accumulated paint and grease of years were taken off the floors with the strongest lye.

Eight bricked-up fireplaces were discovered and promptly excavated from their early desuetude and partitions taken down so as to give a large living room in each apartment. The skylight was cut in the roof for the sculptor's studio and then the place was ready for the painters and plumbers. It was work, hard work, but effective.

The big courtyard is a thing of beauty in itself. Vines planted along its walls climb gayly up to the flowers in the overhanging window-boxes. Cool and remote, it would be a paradise for children, a real playground shut in from the temptations of the street. It is to be turned into an al fresco studio during the hot summer days. With an awning stretched across for shade, it will be far better than the sky-light work room so close to the roof. Besides, Miss Eberle likes to have the flowers and vines about her. Even a "make-believe" garden she thinks can be an inspiration to an artist, and, after all, it is a real bit of out-of-doors.

Seventeen Where One Lives.

Sometimes the old lodgers come back to look at the changes which have come over their former habitation. The ice-man confided to Miss Merriman that he and sixteen others used to live in the rooms which she now keeps for her own; that is, seventeen persons were housed in the same space that now suffices one. Mr. Ice-man allowed that "the lady must find it awful lonesome," but the lady didn't think three small rooms and a big one too extravagant. At least, she didn't feel that it would be easy to lose herself in that space.

After spending an afternoon in this Greenwich Village Paradise it seems a pity there are not more houses like this in the city.